Don Lancaster's

RESOURCE BIN

number eighty five

Another look at some favorite web sites.

Our usual reminder here that the *Resource Bin* is now a two-way column. You can get tech help, consultant referrals and off-the-wall networking on nearly any electronic, *tinaja questing*, personal publishing, money machine, or computer topic by calling me at (520) 428-4073 weekdays 8-5 Mountain Standard Time.

Be certain to frequenctly check out my new *Guru's Lair* web site you'll find at (where else?) *www.tinaja.com* This is the place you'll go for instant tech answers. Among the many files in our library, you will find complete reprint sets for all of the *Resource Bin* and other columns. Plus a brand new Research InfoPack Service.

You will get the best results if you have both *Netscape Communicator* and *Acrobat Reader 3.0* installed.

Where to go for what?

Quite a bit has happened since we last surveyed great places to visit on the web. So I thought it was way past time for an update. Needless to say, the web is where *everything* technical or electronic now seems to be coming down. You simply cannot afford to miss out. You can easily sample the web at your local school or library if you are not yet online.

We saw how to get yourself on the web in RESBN78.PDF. And secrets of web based research in RESBN71.PDF

You'll need a newer computer that supports *Netscape* or another modern browser. Perhaps a Pentium running Windows 98. Or a *Linux* box. While you can use Web TV (I feel this is an outright joke) or any national service such as AOL, I strongly believe a local ISP or *Internet Service Provider* is often your best way to go. Typical charges are around $19 per month or less. This usually includes a CD ROM or similar startup software.

You can pick up that latest *Netscape Browser* free at *www.netscape.com* One useful local ISP is *www.zekes.com*

Tip: Do look into the new wireless services being offered by a few ISP's. These can end up 400K fast, leave you connected all the time, and tie up no phone lines or have any telco or cable fees. But the transceivers are costly and you'll need line-of-sight.

If you are brand new to the web, you go to a site by booting Netscape and then entering a *url* address into the *Location* box. When you find sites you like, you save them by clicking on the *Bookmark* button. Much more on web use, from bare startups to fancy advanced home page design are up at *www.tinaja.com/weblib01.html*

You will find untold zillions of web sites active today. How do you locate the better ones? My choices here are simply based on the sites that I use most often. Instant "hot buttons" for linking most of these are now found at *www.tinaja.com*. Here are a several of my current favorites...

www.questlink.com

This is *the* place to go for electronic data sheets and all application notes. They are industry wide, and represent pretty near anybody and everybody.

NEXT MONTH: Don explores the denizens in the pseudoscience morass.

They also let you instant order small quantities of many harder-to-get ic's and semiconductors.

As with my own site and just about any other source of decent tech info on the web, you will need an *Acrobat Reader* to let you view their ap notes and data sheets. you get this free from *www.adobe.com*. For Acrobat utterly and totally blows HTML away on all counts. More info about this superb PostScript extension can be found at *www.tinaja.com/acrob01.html* and at my *www.tinaja.com/post01.html*

There is also a web version of the old IC master up at *www.icmaster.com* I've yet to find this slow and klutzy site useful for anything. Ferinstance, try finding details on video on-screen display integrated circuits. Questlink gives you dozens of instant results; ic master fails to deliver.

Additional electrical engineering links and link farms can be found at *www.tinaja.com/eeweb01.html* Since the link farms do such an incredibly good job here, I personally provide ee links only to the farms and the actual sites I have a repeating need for.

www.hotbot.com

This one is my favorite web search engine. You'll go here to find what is where on the web. Just type in some keywords, and dozens to hundreds of results get listed. Put the keywords in quotes when searching for a name or other exact match. You can also make use of their "links to this url" search as a great ego trip to find out just who is linking your own site.

There are hundreds of other search engines. The *www.altavista.digital.com* is quite popular, although I use it only for emergency backup. There's also a "inference engine" that trys to gather together larger concepts for you up at *www.infind.com* When this works, it performs very well. When it misses, it does so badly. An example of a *meta* search engine master site which links hundreds of others is *www.kresch.com* They also offer all sorts of webmaster tools, free search engine submissions, and bunches more.

Books

My very favorite online bookstore is *www.lindsaybks.com* Who specialize in republishing the "lost technology" titles on everything from old machine shop practice to his early radio books.

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The quickest way to reach them is to click through on one of their banners found on my website. More info on banners at *www.tinaja.com/advt01.html*

That eight hundred pound gorilla, of course, is *Amazon Books*. Who have now become *the* place to go to get *any* book on *any* topic. Reach them by way of *www.tinaja.com/amlink01.html*

I have also placed a few carefully selected book recommendations on dozens of topics here.

By the way, your use of this exact *www.tinaja.com/amlink01.html* link to Amazon supports both your *Resource Bin* and the *Ask the Guru* web pages at zero additional cost to you.

Oxbridge Media Finder

The fastest, cheapest, and the most convenient way to get up to speed on most any technical topic is by use of those industry insider trade journals. Find these at *www.mediafinder.com*

Online and email publisher linkings often do get provided in their listings. But sadly, Oxbridge does not give you complete snailmail addresses as a free service. Instead, you may have to use the backwards phone finders found at *in-123.infospace.com* or at *www.anywho.com* to pin these down.

Additional phone number sources and other useful web utilities appear at *www.tinaja.com.webwb01.html*

www.drms.com

This is your main site to go to for military surplus sales. As we've seen, there's all sorts of incredible surplus bargains these days. It is now super easy to bid on the web and pay by VISA. We saw lots of details on the access secrets a few months back in RESBN81.PDF and RESBN82.PDF

Examples of the gettable goodies are at *www.tinaja.com/barg01.html*

For convenience, I've split this site access up into these four hot buttons at *www.tinaja.com*...

DRMS1 – *DOD Stuff for sale*
DRMS2 – *Preliminary results*
DRMS3 – *Final sales results*
DRMS4 – *Master search engine*

What I'll personally do is grab the info off the web. Then I print it and stash it in a time ordered box. First the descriptions, then their offerings, and finally a search on items of any special interest. The latter to find their condition and acquisition cost. I will also try to actually inspect their lots when and where feasible. Or have them inspected for me. I'll then worry about and revise the bids for a week before submitting them.

The general object of the game is to buy for a penny on the dollar, sell for a dime, and then try to make a nine percent profit. But lately, I have been bidding far lower. When you win too often, you're paying way too much.

The feds are experimenting with private surplus sales. An outfit called *Levy-Latham* is now handling some of the federal surplus auction offerings.

Be sure to check out their website at *www.levylatham.com*.

Maps and Aerial Photos

I have long been a topo map freak. Besides having handled my share of underground cave mapping. There's a wide variety of map-related web sites that are good and getting better.

Start off with *www6.MapsOnUs.com* These folks sell "roadmap" style maps and trip planning routes. I've found them to be exceptionally useful.

I recently got off on the wrong 4WD track near the Galiuro Wilderness. I was utterly amazed to find this trail online, and was quickly able to "fly" on over to the Powers Hill trail I was really looking for. On the other hand, *Maps On Us* seems to refuse to let you go over Mule Creek pass or through the "tunnel" in Lordsburg.

A useful second alternate here is *MapQuest* at *www.mapquest.com* Who I have found almost as good.

The actual USGS topo maps are still at their "stumbling first steps" stage. Although I'd expect a superb quality free site shortly. That seamlessly lets you print and map to high res.

Meanwhile, there is a new USGS map site up as *Map One* and found at *www.horizons.com/suremaps* This one seems more interested in selling stuff than presenting it online. They seem to have missed the essential fact that web success depends on giving a lot away to sell a little.

Somewhat poorly scanned versions of the USGS maps themselves (sadly with those infuriating borders intact) are sold by *www.bsinet.com/map1* and a few others. Prices are around $16 for 64 quads and a viewer.

Yet another "almost but not quite there" is the outrageously fascinating *Terra Server* image base that is up at *www.terraserver.microsoft.com* This one offers free "flyby" topographic and satellite maps. Down to one meter per pixel resolution, even. There are over four terabytes of data here!

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Intro to PostScript Video	$29.50
PostScript Reference II	$34.50
PostScript Tutorial/Cookbook	$22.50
PostScript by Example	$32.50
Understanding PS Programming	$29.50
PostScript: A Visual Approach	$22.50
PostScript Program Design	$24.50
Thinking in PostScript	$22.50
LaserWriter Reference	$19.50
Type 1 Font Format	$16.50
Acrobat Reference	$24.50
Whole works (all PostScript)	$380.00
Technical Insider Secrets	**FREE**

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SOME RECOMMENDED WEB SITES

www.adobe.com	Acrobat readers and PGML info	www6.MapsOnUs.com	Maps and trip planning
www.tinaja.com/acrob01.html	Acrobat independent support	www.kresch.com	Meta search engine site
www.terraserver.microsoft.com	Aerial & satellite photos	www.drms.com	Military surplus electronics
www.anywho.com	Alternate backwards phone list	us.imdb.com	Movie reviews
www.icmaster.com	Alternate chip info source	www.tinaja.com/dntkwb01.html	Non-technical site favorites
www.drebes.com	Alternate people finder	www.ebay.com	Online real time auctions
www.bigfoot.com	Alternate people finder	www.tinaja.com/patnt01.html	Patent and patenting alternative
www.infospace.com	Alternate people finder	www.whowhere.com	People finder
www.altavista.digital.com	Alternate search engine	www2.shef.ac.uk/~chem/web-elements	Periodical table of chem elements
www.tinaja.com/amlink01.html	Amazon book access	www.tinaja.com/post01.html	PostScript independent support
in-123.infospace.com	Backwards phone directory	www.ups.com	Real time package tracking
www.tinaja.com/advt01.html	Banner advertising secrets	www.tinaja.com.webwb01.html	Resource links for the web
www.tinaja.com/beewb01.html	Bee's favorite links	www.hotbot.com	Search engine site
www.netscape.com	Best Internet browser	www.lindsaybks.com	Source for "new-old" books
www.classifieds2000.com	Buy or sell a car	www.zekes.com	Southeastern Arizona ISP
www.tinaja.com/consul01.html	Consultant's network	wwwdaztcn.wr.usgs.gov	Stream gauge realtime info
www.craftsfaironline.com	Crafts links	www.etrade.com	Stock buy/sell/trade
www.unitedmedia.com/comics/dilbert	Dilbert	quote.yahoo.com	Stock quotes
www.tinaja.com	Eclectic computer & electronic info.	www.tinaja.com/barg01.html	Surplus test equipment
www.questlink.com	Electronic data sheets & ap notes	www.tinaja.com/dtekwb01.html	Technical web site favorites
www.tinaja.com/eeweb01.html	Electronic engineering sites	www.thomasregister.com	Thomas registry of manufacturers
www.mohotta.com	Essential hacker nutrients	www.bsinet.com/map1	Topographic map CD ROM's
www.healthy.net	Free Medline access	www.horizons.com/suremaps	Topographic maps online
www.weavespindye.org	Handweaving links	www.mediafinder.com	Trade journal directory
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www.tinaja.com/info01.html	Infopack research service	www.usps.com	US Post Office
www.internic.net	Internet url registration	www.virtualflorist.com	Virtual flowers
datamation.com/PlugIn/jobs/jobs.html	Job links	www.ghgcorp.com/stilgar/shuttlelinks	Weaving links
www.monster.com	Job opportunities	www.tinaja.com/weblib01.html	Webmastering secrets
www.kbb.com	Kelly Blue Book car values	www.usps.gov/ncsc	Zip code directory

the coverage remains limited. It does take a lot of practice to interpret aerial photos. Especially if they are in black and white and lack a stereo viewing. Things sure get confusingly fuzzy and blobby at maximum res. But I would expect hires stereo color maps online within a year or two at most.

Runway maps and other pilot info for airports are at *www.airnav.com*

These are especially handy if a pilot is going to visit you. But they seem to have left Thatcher International off their list. Probably because there's a few old refrigerators and other minor debris where the runway used to be.

Finally, I have found the USGS real time stream gauge site to be quite intersting. White water folks consider this data essential, while I've found it handy to spot out which remote 4WD crossings are and are not passible. It is also fun watching floods move down through the Gila Valley.

Try out *wwwdaztcn.wr.usgs.gov* or some similar page for your state. Be sure to check these out.

Patents

Patents tend to be highly overrated. Since not one patent in two hundred ever shows a net positive cash flow, a patent repository is mostly of, for, and by losers. Studying patents can (and almost always does) end up as a mind-rotting waste of time.

Nonetheless, there is an intriguing site up at *patent.womplex.ibm.com* This one has summaries and full images of most patents back to 1971, along with collections of other IP info.

More on the perils and pitfalls on patents and patenting are found at my *www.tinaja.com/patnt01.html* Along with my tested and proven real-world alternatives.

Bee's Favorites

Bee is an unindicted *Guru's Lair* co-conspiractor. Her tastes in web sites are wildly different from mine. At any rate, here are some of the sites that Bee uses the most…

For investments, stock quotes from *quote.yahoo.com* and the actual trades at *www.etrade.com* This one does take a membership and investment. For free medline access, *www.healthy.net*

For movies, *us.imdb.com*

For timely customer package real time tracking, *www.ups.com* For postal rates *www.usps.com* Or their zip code directory over at *www.usps.gov/ncsc*

Plus, of course, Dilbert who is over at *www.unitedmedia.com/comics/dilbert* Virtual flowers at *www.virtualflorist.com* And don't forget the essential hacker nutrients at *www.mohotta.com*

Bee is also very much into string bending, so two sites of major interest are a weaving guild at *www.weavespindye.org* Plus all the weaving links at *www.ghgcorp.com/stilgar/shuttlelinks* Additional craft links of all flavors are found at *www.craftsfaironline.com*

There is also the new *www.ebay.com* auction site. But this one can end up a giant time and dollar sink.

Lots of additional annotated links (similar and otherwise) can be found at *www.tinaja.com/beewb01.html*

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Plus a Few More of Mine...

Such as that periodical table of the elements chem info you should find at *www2.shef.ac.uk/~chem/web-elements* Or the extensive job opportunities at *www.datamation.com/PlugIn/jobs/jobs.html* or at *www.monster.com* Or blue book car values at *www.kbb.com* Or car sales at *www.classifieds2000.com*

Or the good old Thomas Registry at *www.thomasregister.com* That web url registration site up at *www.internic.net* Or their *Whois* site finder service up at *www.internic.net/cgi-bin/whois* Or the people finders at *www.whowhere.com* At *www.drebes.com* At *www.bigfoot.com* Or at *www.infospace.com* Be sure to try all of these; iffen the right one don't git ya, the left one will.

More of my favorites are found at *www.tinaja.com/dtekwb01.html* or at my *www.tinaja.com/dntkwb01.html* Split as technical and nontechnical links.

For More Info

Annotated links to many hundreds of other useful web sites are found on various pages of my *www.tinaja.com* I also have a service where I can do fee based research for you. Web centered or otherwise. Many times I can find better and more useful answers a lot quicker than you might by yourself. See *www.tinaja.com/info01.html*

We also have a unique consultant's network of individuals which I can personally recommend for just about any technically related task. You will find their links and capabilities up at *www.tinaja.com/consul01.html*

This Month's Contest

As our contest for this month, just tell me about your favorite web site and why you like it.

There'll be a dozen or more of my new *Incredible Secret Money Machine III* books going to the better entries. Plus an all expense paid *tinaja quest* for two (FOB Thatcher, AZ) going to the very best of all.

Send your written and snailmailed entries on this contest directly to me here at *Synergetics*.

Let's hear from you. ❖

Microcomputer pioneer and guru Don Lancaster is the author of 35 books and countless tech articles. Don maintains his no-charge US tech helpline found at (520) 428-4073, besides offering all of his own books, reprints, and consulting services. Don also offers a free catalog full of his unique products and resource secrets. The best calling times are 8-5 on weekdays, Mountain Standard Time.

Don is the webmaster of his Guru's Lair found at http://www.tinaja.com

Full reprints and preprints of all Don's columns and ongoing tech support appear here. You can reach Don at Synergetics, Box 809, Thatcher, AZ 85552. Or send any messages to don@tinaja.com

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